

CITY OF NEWTON WEEKLY REPORT

Week of February 2, 2018

FROM THE DESK OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR...



During the third week of the 2018 legislative session, the Iowa Senate proposed a de-appropriation bill (SF2117 – formerly SSB3089) calling for \$52 million in cuts to the Fiscal Year 2018 budget. Importantly, there were no cuts proposed to the commercial and industrial property tax backfill. The de-appropriation bill was filed on Thursday, January 25 and passed out of the Senate Appropriations Committee on a party-line vote of 13-8.

HF2063, the first TIF bill of the session, has been filed in the House, although a subcommittee has not been scheduled as of this writing. The League is registered against this bill. It is quite extensive; the bill's provisions include:

- Additional reporting requirements for the report filed by the Legislative Services Agency
- Prohibition of the use of urban renewal funds for public building construction, maintenance, repair, remodeling and equipment
- Amends the definition of “blighted area”
- Amends the definition of “economic development area” to prohibit the use of TIF for any development of agricultural land for residential
- Caps existing perpetual TIF districts:
 - Economic Development (that were created prior to 1995): July 1, 2038
 - Slum & Blight: July 1, 2043
- Removes School Foundation Levy (\$5.40) from TIF
- Allows counties to pass a resolution removing county levy from TIF district
- All economic development TIFs capped at 20 years
- All slum & blight TIFs capped at 25 years
- Prohibits use of TIF on a business moving two miles or less within a city

UPCOMING EVENTS

- February 2 - Blues Under the Blue Roof at the Newton Public Library - 6:30 p.m.
- February 4 - Centre for Arts and Artists Fused Glass Pendants Class - 6 p.m.
- February 8 - Teen Calligraphy Class at Newton Public Library - 6 p.m.
- February 8 - Newton Cardinals Girls Basketball Senior Night at Newton Senior High - 6:15 p.m.
- February 9 - Greater Newton Area Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting for Katie Jane Photography - 5 p.m.

CONTINUE READING THE CITY OF NEWTON WEEKLY REPORT TO LEARN WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

ADMINISTRATION

NEWTON SELECTED AS OVERNIGHT HOST FOR RAGBRAI XLVI

Newton was announced as an overnight host for RAGBRAI XLVI on Saturday, January 27th during the RAGBRAI Route Announcement Party at the Iowa Bike Expo. The 2018 Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa, which will take place from July 22 to 28, will start in Onawa and end in Davenport. In between, riders will stop overnight in Denison, Jefferson, Ames, Newton, Sigourney and Iowa City. The full route, including pass-through towns and specific roads, is expected to be released in March. An Advisory Board and Executive committee are being created as part of the organizing committee and the first meetings with RAGBRAI staff are scheduled for early February.

BUDGET UPDATE

Work continues on the FY19 budget for the City of Newton. Staff has been discussing options for increasing revenues and decreasing expenditures in the General Fund. After initial budget proposals were received from all departments the expenditures in the General Fund were \$770,000 more than revenues. This has been reduced to \$211,000 as of today. The projected ending balance in the General Fund is currently at 24.6% of budgeted revenues which is .4% under the current 25% policy. An additional \$30,000 is needed in additional cuts or increased revenue to maintain the 25% level in the General Fund.

The Employee Benefits Fund is a major concern in the upcoming budget and future years. Initial insurance rates for FY19 indicated

a 21.3% increase. The City's insurance broker worked with Wellmark and the current proposed rate has been lowered to an increase of 16.53% with adjustments to the self-insurance portion of the City's insurance. The amount of increase is approximately \$206,000 in the Employee Benefits Fund for health insurance as all other expenses are projected to remain stable.

The proposal that staff is currently working on does not raise the current tax levy rate and includes needed equipment items and several road projects. Administration staff appreciates the willingness of all departments to work together in this challenging budget year.

GROUND EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRANSPORT

HF2103, a bill that – upon federal approval-would allow eligible ground emergency medical transportation providers to receive supplemental reimbursements from the federal government for uncompensated care costs associated with the transport of patients covered by Medicaid, passed out of a House subcommittee this week. The Iowa League of Cities is registered in support of this legislation.

IOWA LEAGUE OF CITIES LEGISLATIVE DAY

The annual Iowa League of Cities' Legislative Day will be held this Tuesday, Feb. 6 from 1-4 p.m. in the Legislative Dining Room at the State Capitol. This year, several of our speakers are current state legislators who formerly served as elected or appointed city officials. They will discuss how their experience at the local level has informed their work in the Statehouse.

GDLMI SEEKS NOMINATIONS FOR COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM CLASS OF 2019

The Greater Des Moines Community Leadership Program prepares leaders from across Greater Des Moines to be effective stewards for our community's future. The nine-month curriculum offers a view of our community from divergent vantage points, heightens awareness of current conditions and issues, enhances individual and group leadership skills, and helps class members see themselves as partners for change.

Nominations for the Community Leadership Program Class of 2019 will be accepted from Leadership Institute alumni and community members until 11:59 p.m. on March 2nd at gdml.com/CommunityLeadershipProgram. Nominees will be invited to submit a formal application for consideration and class selection will be completed in June. Criteria for selection include community leadership experience and demonstrated commitment to community engagement. Members of the Class of 2019 will represent our community, including private, public, and non-profit sectors.

Interested individuals are invited to learn more about the program at the Community Leadership Program Informational Event taking place on Monday, February 12th, from 5 - 7 p.m. at Jasper Winery in Des Moines. Registration is free and RSVPs are appreciated at gdml.com.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

UPDATE ON HOTEL MAYTAG

Hotel Maytag Investors LLC continues to work through a very complicated financial package, which includes Workforce Housing and Historic tax credits and eight other “layers” of financing. The City’s Workforce Housing Loan application is complete and will be considered for approval by the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) board on February 7th, while other program details (including the Parking Space Lease) are being finalized in compliance with IFA specifications. Demolition of the hotel interior is scheduled to begin in March, with construction slated to be underway in early May. The developer estimates that all construction and renovation should be substantially completed by April, 2019.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

An organizational meeting was held at DMACC on Tuesday, January 30th to begin the process of re-establishing a Jasper County chapter. Representatives from many community groups and businesses were in attendance, and Habitat for Humanity staff members outlined the process of chartering the county organization as well as the responsibilities of the Steering Committee. The next step will be a meeting to appoint 10-15 people to the Steering Committee and set goals.

FOUNTAIN HILLS ESTATES

Venture Homes has sold their nearly completed home on lot 16 and is in the process of acquiring lot 12 for another new home the company plans to build in the spring. Clapsaddle-Garber Associates has been retained to re-

plat and stake the lots on the east side of W 22nd Avenue S to make them more accessible for builders, in consideration of the challenges posed by the steep terrain.

NEWTON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION UPDATES

- Leadership Class: The 8 week course started January 30th, with 22 people signed up.
- NDC is partnering with DMACC, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Jasper County, and the Goodwill Career Connection Center to hold a Job/Career Fair on March 8th from 4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. and DMACC in Newton.
- Junior Achievement has expanded to Thomas Jefferson Elementary with six new volunteers trained last week. Those volunteers are in addition to JA in the high school business classes and at WEST Academy for personal finance.
- Phoenix Investors (owners of Plant Two) is working on getting space available for TPI Composites and Global Fiberglass. Both operations are scheduled to get underway in the second quarter of 2018. Both will lease approximately 100,000 square feet.

NEWTON HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION UPDATES

- Fairmeadows North Plat 8 and Deed of Restrictions have been filed and we are moving to close on the 4 “reserved lots”.
- Newton’s housing statistics should make us all very proud: From July 2014 to January 1, 2018, 40 new units have been permitted (single family or duplex). NHDC is in ongoing

conversations with three multi-family developers who have expressed serious interest in building new apartments in our community.

- The purchase of the 70.7 acres known as the Barton Land continues to move forward and NHDC plans to close in March.
- NHDC has worked on updating a list of Newton apartment complexes and contacts. The document is available through NHDC who will maintain the document.

DMACC UPDATES

- DMACC renamed the Maytag Campus to Legacy Plaza. In renaming the former Maytag headquarters campus to Legacy Plaza, DMACC was very mindful of the long heritage associated with the historic buildings and looks forward to working with the community in honoring this legacy while building a new future for the campus.
- Numbers and Letters, owned by Ken and Jonni Barthelman, moved into the Legacy Plaza on February 1st. They will occupy a portion of the first floor of the historic building 16 where they will produce reflective mailbox and house numbers, which are sold on Amazon.com and Wayfair.com.
- Iowa Economic Development Authority Director Debi Durham is scheduled to tour Legacy Plaza on February 7th and visit with Aureon which has been a tenant of the plaza for 10 years.

HOMETOWN PRIDE UPDATES

- The DMACC Greenspace consultant contract will be on the Feb. 12th City Council meeting agenda. It will be a 4 month process with numerous community stakeholders. This project will hopefully jumpstart discussion of housing options in the area between the Greenspace and downtown.
- The Interchange 164 windblade art sculpture project is proceeding. We are finalizing a site from 3 candidate sites and obtaining the necessary approvals.
- Wayfinding signage project is approaching completion with the installation of signs on state highway routes within Newton.

For more information on the updates in this weekly report, please contact Matt Muckler, City Administrator, mattm@newtongov.org, Katrina Davis, Administrative Services Manager, at katrinad@newtongov.org; Lisa Fraiser, Finance Officer at lisaf@newtongov.org; or Danielle Rogers, Community Marketing Manager at danieller@newtongov.org.